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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/066,879	02/04/2002	Dale E. Gulick	2000.051700/TT4031	5870
23720	7590	03/02/2006	EXAMINER	
WILLIAMS, MORGAN & AMERSON 10333 RICHMOND, SUITE 1100 HOUSTON, TX 77042			DUNCAN, MARC M	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2113	

DATE MAILED: 03/02/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 10/066,879	<b>Applicant(s)</b> GULICK, DALE E.	
	<b>Examiner</b> Marc Duncan	<b>Art Unit</b> 2113	

**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --**  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 16 February 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-60 is/are pending in the application.  
4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-39 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 40-60 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 04 February 2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Status of the Claims***

Claims 40-60 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over  
Poisner in view of Smit et al.

Claims 1-39 are allowed.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all  
obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148  
USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining  
obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 40-60 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over  
Poisner in view of Smit et al.

Regarding claims 40, 47 and 54:

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Poisner teaches entering a system state in the computer system (starting the computer system).

Poisner teaches resetting a watchdog timer in col. 2 lines 31-34.

Poisner teaches determining an expiration of the watchdog timer in col. 2 line 66- col. 3 line 3.

Poisner teaches evaluating the system state in the computer system in col. 3 lines 21-40.

Poisner teaches determining a system error in the computer system in col. 5 lines 10-14.

Poisner teaches responding to the system error by a microcontroller on the integrated circuit in col. 3 lines 21-40 and col. 5 lines 10-14.

Poisner does not explicitly teach the watchdog timer being on the integrated circuit. Poisner does, however, teach a watchdog associated with the processor.

Smit teaches the watchdog timer being on the integrated circuit in col. 1 lines 62-64.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to combine the watchdog timer of Smit with the timer-enabled system of Poisner.

One of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention would have been motivated to make the combination because Smit teaches that the integral watchdog timer of the Smit reference provides improved flexibility to the system.

Regarding claims 41, 48 and 55:

Poisner teaches wherein resetting the watchdog timer on the integrated circuit comprises resetting the watchdog timer on the integrated circuit in response to entering the system state in the computer system in col. 2 lines 31-34 and lines 43-44.

Regarding claims 42, 49 and 56:

Poisner teaches wherein evaluating the system state in the computer system comprises evaluating the system state in the computer system in response to determining the expiration of the watchdog timer on the integrated circuit in col. 3 lines 21-40 and col. 5 lines 10-14.

Regarding claims 43, 50 and 57:

Poisner teaches storing an indication of the system state in col. 3 lines 56-62.

Regarding claims 44, 51 and 58:

Poisner teaches wherein storing the indication of the system state comprises storing the indication of the system state in a storage location on the integrated circuit in col. 3 lines 62-67.

Regarding claims 45, 52 and 59:

Poisner teaches wherein storing the indication of the system state comprises storing the indication of the system state in response to entering the system state in the computer system in col. 3 lines 56-67.

Regarding claims 46, 53 and 60:

Poisner teaches wherein evaluating the system state in the computer system comprises reading the indication of the system state in col. 3 lines 59-67.

### ***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments filed 2/16/06 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Regarding applicant's arguments, on pages 2-3, concerning claims 40-60, the examiner respectfully disagrees. In response to applicant's argument that there is no suggestion to combine the references, the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, there is a clear statement by the Smit reference of a benefit provided by the integral watchdog timer. As applicant will recall, the expectation of some advantage is the strongest rationale for combining references. See MPEP 2144.

### ***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Marc Duncan whose telephone number is 571-272-3646. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9:00-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert Beausoliel can be reached on 571-272-3645. The fax phone

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number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ma' followed by a stylized flourish.

md